

Supporting research leadership in Africa

I read your Editorial published in *The Lancet Global Health* (May, 2016)¹ and *The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology*² with some surprise. It is unfortunate that you neglected to mention that the Wellcome Trust has recently greatly increased its commitment to building research capacity in Africa.

In 2014, we reviewed our funding in Africa with the intention of expanding our support. Since then we have launched DELTAS Africa, in partnership with the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).³ DELTAS Africa is a £60 million scheme over 5 years through which we will fund 11 consortia and expect to train up to 2000 African researchers.⁴ This activity is in addition to our major programmes in Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa, the Human Hereditary and Health (H3A Africa) programme, and Global Health Trials, which together total more than £230 million of current investment.

At the same time, with our partners at the UK Department for International Development and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are establishing and investing in the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA), the first and only pan-African funding platform whose sole aim is to strengthen research capacity. With the establishment of AESA, we signal a real shift in the centre of gravity of leadership and eventually funding of African science to Africa.

Competition from excellent programmes led by African researchers continues to grow, and while inevitably this means that some will not be successfully funded, it is a sure sign of a flourishing research environment.

I am the Head of International Operations and Partnerships at Wellcome Trust. I declare no other competing interests.

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- 1 Davies J, Mullan Z. Research capacity in Africa—will the sun rise again? *Lancet Glob Health* 2016; **4**: e287.
- 2 Davies J, Mullan Z. Research capacity in Africa—will the sun rise again? *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol* 2016; **4**: 375.
- 3 The Wellcome Trust. Leading African scientists to drive continent's research agenda. Sept 10, 2015. <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases/2015/WTP059728.htm> (accessed April 29, 2016).
- 4 The Wellcome Trust. Research boost creates more opportunities for African scientists. April 20, 2016. <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases/2016/WTP060319.htm> (accessed April 29, 2016).



For more on KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Programme see <http://kemri-wellcome.org/>

For more on the Malawi-Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme see <http://www.mlw.medcol.mw/>

For more on the Africa Centre For Population Health see <http://www.africacentre.ac.za/>

For more on H3A Africa see <http://h3africa.org/>

For more on the Global Health Trials scheme see <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/Funding-schemes/Global-health-trials-scheme/index.htm>